

**Island Trees School District  
Reopening Plan  
2021-2022**

**8/24/21**



*J. Fred Sparke Elementary School  
Michael F. Stokes Elementary School  
Island Trees Memorial Middle School  
Island Trees High School*

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## **Introduction**

Island Trees Union Free School District (the “District”) has developed a comprehensive plan for the 2021-2022 school year (the “Plan”).

Our overarching goal remains to provide a safe learning and working environment for our students and staff in our four school buildings. In support of our overarching goal of providing a safe learning and working environment, we have established the following guidelines:

### **Full In-Person Learning: a Return to Pre-COVID Schedules and Activities**

- School will reopen fully and in-person for all students starting Thursday, September 2, 2021.
- Our schools will not host any full-year “remote” learning experiences for our students.
- Students will follow traditional school starting times and schedules.
- Arrival and dismissal times, as well as class passing times, will return to pre-COVID times.
- Hallways and lockers will be open for use.
- The district has added back all of our AIS support classes, K-12.
- Students will have all of the enriching co-curricular activities and athletic experiences they justly deserve, with protocols to keep them safe.

### **COVID-19 Vaccination**

According to the CDC, “Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic.” Information about the vaccine, who is eligible for the vaccine and where to get a vaccine is available at <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> and <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/5143/COVID-19-Vaccine>.

### **Face Coverings and Barriers**

Island Trees will follow the New York State mask mandates shared with the school district on Tuesday, August 24, 2021. In the event the requirements are changed, the district will revisit the issue with the Board of Education.

- Masks will be optional outdoors (subject to change by the NYS Governor).

- Masks will be required for bus transportation.
- We do not plan to use polycarbonate barriers; they have been removed from our student desks.
  
- Additional information/protocols regarding Face Coverings:
  - Acceptable coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. Face coverings should be two-ply.
  - The district will obtain and maintain adequate supplies of cloth face coverings for school staff and for students who forget their face coverings.
  - PPE used by school health professionals will be provided by the district if requested.
  - Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled, may not be shared and should be properly stored or discarded.
  - Students who are unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where such covering would impair their physical or mental health, will be permitted to attend school without a face covering as long as appropriate medical documents are provided and accepted by the district through a 504 process. When appropriate, 504 accommodations may include plans to support the student in developing tolerance for a face covering.
  - Each school in the district will instruct staff to provide face covering breaks as needed.
  - The district will continue to remind and train all staff, students, contractors and vendors on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable) and discard PPE, including but not limited to, appropriate face coverings.

### **Layered In-School Prevention Strategies**

- In accordance with the most recent guidance from the CDC, instructional space will be configured to maintain 3 feet of social distance between students whenever possible.
- We will continue to promote good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene practices.
- We will continue to follow CDC guidance regarding cleaning, disinfecting and ventilation in our schools.
- Staff and students will be trained on proper use of face coverings, proper handwashing and social distancing.
- At the elementary level, to the extent possible, students will be assigned to a fixed cohort (i.e., a self-contained, preassigned group) and cohorts will not be intermingled. In the event that cohorts need to be intermingled for instructional purposes, other preventative measures (such as social distancing) will be in place.

- Visitors will be limited to those who are essential to the operation of our schools. Visitors may be required to complete a COVID Screening form.
- We will continue to work closely with the Nassau County Department of Health in reporting any confirmed cases of COVID-19, and will continue to participate in contact tracing in response to confirmed cases.
- We will continue to maintain safety protocols established by the CDC, the NYSDOH, the NYSED, The Nassau County Department of Health, and other state and local authorities.
- Students with disabilities or other health care needs (parents) should contact their child's principal if they are in need of accommodations, modifications and/or assistance for the 2021-22 school year (504 process).

### **Keeping the Community Informed**

- We will continuously communicate with the community, and keep you informed regarding COVID-19 impacts on our school and any changes to our plan.
- Signs will be posted in prominent locations, emphasizing safety protocols including hand washing and social distancing.
- District and building website will provide up-to-date information on health and safety, mental health, and other pertinent items.
- The District will also use our ConnectEd platform for mass communication with parents via email and phone.

### **Daily Health Screening for Students and Staff**

- Staff will be trained to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 in themselves and in their students.
- Parents will fill out a one-time "Health Screening" assurance form for their children. The form asks parents to attest to health screening their children each day for the entire school year.
- Parents will be encouraged to check their child(ren)'s temperature and monitor their child(ren)'s health daily, prior to arriving at the bus stop and/or entering the school building;
- Parents with a child who is ill, including (but not limited to) anyone with a fever, are required to keep their child at home and contact a healthcare professional.
- Staff are asked to check their temperature daily and conduct their own health screening prior to entering the school building;
- Staff who are ill, including (but not limited to) anyone with a fever, are required to stay at home and contact a healthcare professional.

### Plan for Responding to Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

- The school will follow Education Law 906 (whenever a student in public schools show symptoms of any communicable or infectious disease reportable under the public health law that imposes a significant risk of infection of other sign schools, he or she shall be excluded from the school and sent home immediately, in a safe and proper conveyance. The lead school nurse or school nurse shall immediately notify the Department of Health);
- School staff must immediately report any illness of student or staff to the school nurse or other designated school staff;
- Students suspected of having COVID-19 who are awaiting transport home will be isolated in a room or area separate from others;
- Staff members suspected of having COVID-19 are required to contact their school administrator prior to leaving for home and, after leaving the building, to contact a healthcare professional.
- In response to a confirmed positive case of COVID-19 in the school building, the District will:
  - Work with the Nassau County DOH to conduct contact tracing and to determine appropriate next steps that may be needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.
  - Clean, disinfect, and ventilate all affected areas in the building in accordance with recommended cleaning protocols.

### Quarantine Required for “Positive Cases” and “Close Contacts”

- In accordance with CDC and DOH guidelines, positive cases will be required to isolate.
- In the following CDC and DOH guidelines, “close contacts” will need to quarantine for a period of 10 days from their last contact with the infected person.
- “Close contact” of a person who tests positive is defined as follows:
  - Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more within a 24 hour period, during the period of time that the infected person was contagious (2 days prior to exhibiting symptoms or a positive test, whichever is earlier).
  - **Exception for persons who are fully vaccinated:** A person who is fully vaccinated will not be required to quarantine, unless he/she exhibits symptoms of the disease
  - **Exception for students:** In a K-12 classroom, students will **not** be considered close contacts and **will not need to quarantine IF:**

- **Student was within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student AND**
  - **Both students were consistently and correctly wearing well-fitting masks AND**
  - **Other prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place.**

*\* In the event of widespread infection, the District may place a class/school or district on remote instruction (in abundance of caution).*

*\* In the event a child is quarantined by the Department of Health and/or school district, remote learning opportunities will be made available whenever feasible.*

### **Returning to School after Possible or Confirmed COVID-19 Absence**

Non-COVID-19 (not diagnosed with COVID-19) may return to school:

- Once there is no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines, and person has felt well for 24 hours;
- Person has been diagnosed with another condition and a healthcare provider has written a note stating that they are clear to return to school.

As per CDC guidelines, person diagnosed with COVID-19 should not be at school and should stay home until:

- 10 days from the start of the symptoms or a positive test result (whichever came first), AND
- Person is fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, AND
- Symptoms have improved.

### **COVID-19 Contact Tracing Plan**

- The District-level COVID-19 Contact Tracing Coordinator is our Lead Nurse, Karen Stephens, RN; the nurse in every building will assist with contact tracing as well. Our nurses will coordinate with our building and district administration to ensure that all protocols are followed. beginning with our daily screening questionnaire, and managing any self-reported or symptomatic individuals, as well as anyone who was exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last **10 days**.
- The District notifies the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors.
- Contact tracing, a public health function, will be performed by the local public health department to trace all persons who have come into contact with a confirmed case of

COVID-19. This will allow for public health officials to put in place isolation or other measures to limit the spread of the virus.

- The District, including all school buildings, will cooperate with state and local health department's contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts. Schools will assist public health departments in knowing who may have had contact at school with a confirmed case.
- Confidentiality will be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff will not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local department of health.

### **School Closures**

The District will continue to prepare for situations in which one or more school buildings need to close due to a significant number of students or staff testing positive for COVID-19 or if it is directed to do so because there is a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases. The District may also choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing, to help mitigate a rise in cases. The District will consult with the Department of Health when making such decisions.

### **Facilities**

The District Plan is designed to provide protection against the spread of coronavirus. Among other things:

- All schools in the District will continue to meet or exceed ventilation requirements.
- All schools in the District will take steps to promote health and safety, including regularly cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and high traffic areas to prevent the spread of infection.
- The District will deploy deep-cleaning schedules at least daily, frequently disinfecting door handles, handrails, sink handles, restroom surfaces, playground equipment, desks, and shared items;
- The District will employ the use of appropriate disinfection processes, including backpack, cart and handheld electro-static spray applicators, touchless restroom cleaning machines, as well as traditional disinfection and sanitation practices.

### **Visitors**

- Visits to schools by individuals other than staff and students will be limited.
- Parents of enrolled students are encouraged to conduct school business with school



personnel remotely whenever possible.

- Visitors to schools, other than parents of enrolled students, are limited to those who are essential to the school's operation.
- Visitors may be required to complete a COVID--19 screening form with contact information prior to entering the school building.
- Visitors may be required to wear masks.

### **Child Nutrition**

The District recognizes that child nutrition is an important function of schools, and that child nutrition is critical to a child's physical development as well as his/her education. Lunch will be provided to students free of charge; families who qualify are nevertheless expected to complete an application for free and reduced-price lunch. Our Plan:

- Ensures that all enrolled students will have access to school meals each school day, whether school is in-person or remote;
- Addresses all applicable health and safety guidelines;
- Complies with Child Nutrition Program requirements;
- Incorporates measures to protect students with food allergies;
- Promotes hand hygiene before and after eating, and discourages the sharing of food and beverages (through instruction and signage and single portion condiments).

In addition, the Plan includes the following (among other things):

- Common areas used for lunch periods will be configured to encourage social distancing (3 feet) whenever possible;
- Schools will maximize physical distance to the extent possible when students are moving through the food service line and while eating. The schools have added extra tables and seating to facilitate distancing.
- If students eat in a common area, the area will be cleaned and disinfected prior to the next group arriving for a meal;
- "Grab and Go" meals will be available at one location per school building for students who may need to quarantine and learn remotely;
- In the event that school is closed, the Plan includes procedures to notify families and allow families to come to pick-up meals curbside at the schools.

### **Transportation**

The District recognizes that the school bus is an extension of the classroom, and services should be provided to all students with consistency and equity. In conjunction with our transportation carrier, the District Plan ensures:

- Regular school bus cleaning/disinfecting measures at least once a day;
- High contact spots will be wiped down after each run during the driver's post-run inspection;
- Training for school bus staff regarding COVID safety protocols.
- Students must wear masks on the bus.
- Students who do not have a mask will NOT be denied transportation, but will be provided one by the driver;
- Students with a disability which would prevent them from wearing a mask will not be forced to do so or denied transportation. In such instances, seating will be rearranged so the student without a mask is socially distanced from other students. Parents are expected to provide documentation of the disability;
- School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics will wear a face covering along with optional face shield;
- School bus drivers, monitors, attendants and mechanics shall perform a self-health assessment for symptoms of COVID 19 before arriving to work;
- Transportation staff will be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water before and after the a.m. and p.m. runs whenever possible.

### **Social & Emotional Well-Being**

Our students' social emotional well-being is our top priority, not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social, and emotional space for academic learning to occur. The district has in place a multi-level system to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff. The District will continue to leverage community partnerships to ensure students and staff have access to available resources, including partnerships with local community organizations such as the Youth Educational Services Community Counseling Center, Northwell Health and the Nassau BOCES Mental Health Consortium, in order to further support evidence-based interventions and wellness initiatives.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Teaching and learning is the heart of all that we do in Island Trees; therefore, our plan includes the following steps for success:

- The identification and prioritization of learning standards.
- The use of locally developed and standardized measures for diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring to determine and address learning gaps;
- The collaborative planning of consistent content delivery, engaging learning opportunities, and common assessments;

- The application of best practices, including meaningful feedback, clear learning expectations, and ongoing communication;
- The continuation of effective grading practices in each building; and
- The creation of learning experiences that are inclusive, culturally responsive, and consider the needs of all students.

### **Technology for Learning**

The District has taken steps to support access and equity for students, staff, and families, including the following:

- All of our students will be equipped with their own Chromebooks for all learning situations.
- Students will continue to be provided with training and ongoing technical support on the use of these devices.

Students and families will continue to be provided with specific training and information as follows:

- Working with district-issued Chromebooks
- Accessing the District's streamlined digital platforms: SeeSaw (K-1) and Google Classroom (2-12)
- Navigating the Parent Portal and Power School
- Contacting our Technology Department for support

### **Special Education**

The District recognizes the important role that schools play in providing access and equity for students with disabilities to be able to access the general education curriculum. Accordingly, the District will provide the following:

- A Free Appropriate Public Education ("FAPE") consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those providing special education and services;
- Meaningful parent engagement regarding the provision of services to their child;
- Access to the necessary instructional and technological supports to meet the unique needs of students; and
- Documentation of programs and services and communications with parents.

To the extent possible, the District will ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to high quality programs that are designed, based on their individual needs and abilities, to enable them to achieve the desired learning results established for all students.

### **SCOPE Before and After School Childcare Program**

Measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students during the Before and After School Child Care Programs operated by SCOPE at the elementary schools. SCOPE will follow all district protocols at Stokes and Sparke.

### **Universal Pre-K Program Operated by Variety Child Learning Center**

Measures are in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and students during the Before and After School Child Care Programs operated by SCOPE at the elementary schools. Variety will follow all district protocols at Stokes and Sparke.

### **Athletics**

The District recognizes that school-sponsored sports and extracurricular activities provide students with enrichment opportunities that can help them learn and achieve and support their social, emotional, and mental health.

As such, the District remains committed to providing our students with opportunities to participate in physical education and athletics in a safe environment. In order to assure this, students and adults will follow the same school-day policies and procedures during athletic and extracurricular activities. Additionally, the following safeguards and procedures may be put in place to reduce the possibility of COVID transmission and quarantines amongst students and adults involved in athletics and extracurricular activities:

- Participants will be required to wear masks on all school buses (until further notice).
- Participants may be required to wear masks for all indoor activities (as tolerated).
- Participants are encouraged to wear masks for all outdoor activities (as tolerated).
- Participants in high risk sports may be subject to school provided COVID testing based on community infection rates and/or State/CDC/NYSPHSAA mandates.
- Participants may be assigned to “pods” when using locker rooms to reduce the number of people using locker rooms at same time and potential close contacts of individuals.

The safeguards listed above are based on the latest NYSED Guidance (August, 2021) which states that “People who are fully vaccinated can refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if they are asymptomatic, facilitating continued participation in in-person learning, sports, and extracurricular activities”. Additionally, “if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently [wear] well-fitting masks the entire time”, they will not be subject to quarantine rules.